

Melksham Town Council
Minutes of the Committee
on Monday 9th June 2025

PRESENT: Councillor A Westbrook (chair)
Councillor P Aves
Councillor J Crossley
Councillor A Griffin
Councillor J Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE Councillor J Oatley

OFFICERS Hayley Bell Acting CEO/Town Clerk
Tracy Predeth Locum Clerk
Dave Elms Amenities Manager
Brian Bennett Facilities Manager
Andrew Meacham Committee Clerk

PUBLIC: Three members of the public were present.

1/25 Apologies

There were no apologies.

2/25 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3/25 Public Participation

Resident - What are the plans regarding the equipment purchased for the dog park that remain in storage. Where does the council plan to use this and when? Understand that the equipment was going to be modified and replaced.

Chair - Set out a timeline. Equipment is not fit for purpose and has scrap value only, the suppliers having gone out of business. There are no plans to put any equipment into the dog park. No senior officers in post were involved and council must learn from the experience and draw a line in the sand.

Resident - Dog Park area is a flood zone and there has been talk of re-naturalisation. Removal and replacement of the remaining play surface would require flood advice and potentially a licence from the Environment Agency. What flood advice has the council been given regarding the flood zone in KGV and have the licenses been obtained to do the work?

Chair - Confirmed that the contractor was approved by the Environment Agency and has all necessary qualifications and certification to carry out the work. The Chair confirmed that

only the wet pour was being removed. Area will be levelled and very thin layer of topsoil added if required. Contractor has all necessary licences.

Resident - Since COVID, why has the Masterplan not been progressed? What are the timeline and intentions of the current council to finally deliver the masterplan that was consulted on 5 years ago? The Chair has already said that the matter will; be reviewed so presume a timeline will be forthcoming once the review is completed.

Resident – Why were funds used for the dog park when it had not been consulted? Appreciate that councillors present were not involved and it was a decision made by council at the time.

Resident – Would councillors agree that the main park should be fit for use by the whole town including the minority 1% with severe disabilities and how are you looking at ensuring that the plans are being implemented to accommodate them such as installation of changing places, facilities, speciality play equipment and sensory items?

Chair – Essential to get the masterplan back on the agenda. Would like, with council agreement, to get NVB back to do an update.

Resident – What about the actual specification of delivery to include items that are suitable for the 1% most disabled within our community.

Chair – Would hope that would be part of a masterplan update.

Resident – What sources of grant funding are the council exploring to expediate the delivery of the masterplan at KGV and other public spaces to ensure value for money and delivery in the near future.

Chair – Would expect this to be part of any work on the masterplan. First meeting of this committee in new council so many priorities.

Resident – What plans do the council have for managing and enhancing the biodiversity within KGV and other public spaces given the known presence of protected species such as bats and voles and given the high publicity on things such as the UN Sustainability goals for biodiversity and the Government's 25 year Environmental Improvement Plan of 2021.

Chair – Biodiversity is discussed on many occasions and there is an item on the agenda to fund a study. Very keen and again would be part of the masterplan. Biodiversity Plan is a very good idea and high importance but also have to be aware of staffing levels.

Resident – Can council commit to ensuring full, completed ecological surveys are done on all Town Council managed land and that the results of those surveys are published to enable community groups and others to access the information freely. I work for an environmental charity and there are many volunteers willing to carry out annual species and habitat surveys and keep that information up to date. Is that something the council would commit to doing.

Chair – Cannot commit to that tonight as not on the agenda. Can ask the CEO to put it on a future agenda and ask the resident to attend to help move it forward.

4/25 Committee Membership

This item was advanced up the agenda.

It was proposed by Councillor A Westbrook, seconded by Councillor J Westbrook and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Oatley to the Facilities & Amenities Committee.

5/25 Minutes

The minutes of 24th February 2025, having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair Councillor J Westbrook.

6/25 Vice Chair

It was proposed by Councillor J Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Crossley and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Oatley as Vice Chair of the Facilities & Amenities Committee.

7/25 Finance

It was noted that there are anomalies and the Acting CEO/Town Clerk would be meeting with the RFO.

8/25 East of Melksham Tree Planting

Councillor A Westbrook spoke to the item.

It was proposed by Councillor A Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Aves and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to approve payment of £500 for an Ecology & Diversity Report from the sums held in reserve for the project. Councillor Griffin and Councillor J Westbrook will seek to recover the cost from Wiltshire Council.

9/25 Amenities Team

The Amenities Manager gave his report

It was proposed by Councillor J Westbrook, seconded by Councillor Griffin and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to devolve power so that the Amenities Manager, in consultation with the CEO/Town Clerk can decide on day to day opening of the Splashpad based on the weather conditions, provided a decision to close is communicated to councillors.

It was felt that no decision was needed on playground upgrades programme as resolutions had been made previously and action could be taken based on ROSPA Report and visual inspection.

The Chair reminded those present that a resolution had been passed that no tree should be planted without a watering bag. It had also been suggested that trees have details to enable residents to contact the Town Hall if they think a tree needs watering.

The committee asked that officers look into improving the provision of water to allotments. It was suggested that water butts could be offered.

The report was noted.

10/25 Facilities/Assembly Hall Update Report

The Facilities Manager gave his report.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow a member of the public to speak on CCTV.

The resident asked for clarification on the exact location of new cameras. It was confirmed that the location was still to be decided on the basis of advice from Wiltshire Police. The resident referenced a letter he had delivered to the Town Hall and asked for a response.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

The report was noted.

11/25 Town Centre Regeneration

The Acting CEO/Town Clerk presented the update.

It was noted that planters on the high pavement had been vetoed by Wiltshire Council.

Members expressed concern about the condition of the K2 telephone box located in Littlejohn Avenue.

12/25 Asset Transfer

It was noted that architects were to be invited to present to the Council.

13/25 Confidential Session

It was **UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential and sensitive nature of the business about to be transacted, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 the public and press are excluded and are instructed to withdraw.

14/25 Health & Safety Audit Report

The Locum Clerk, the Acting CEO/Town Clerk and the Facilities Manager spoke to the item.

The Facilities Manager confirmed that there was a schedule of works to address issues in the report. Members asked for a progress report to be provided to Full Council.

Meeting closed at:

Signed Dated